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'SPIES IN DISGUISE'

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Belichick, at least, seems pleased with Brady's play. 9



'ATTEMPTED COUP'

President Trump's fighting words, as stated in a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on the eve of his expected impeachment. Trump also cast the Democratic party as enemies of democracy, calling their impeachment articles "illegal" and "partisan." 2

THINGS
TO
KNOW

1



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting with Guatemala's President Jimmy Morales in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington on December 17, 2019. REUTERS

Trump accuses Democrats of 'attempted coup' on eve of impeachment vote

Meanwhile, McConnell openly admitted inability to be impartial.

On the eve of his expected impeachment in the U.S. House of Representatives, President Donald Trump accused Democrats of pursuing an "illegal, partisan attempted coup" and declaring "open war" on American

democracy as they seek to remove him from office for pressing Ukraine to investigate political rival Joe Biden.

Trump's remarks came in a signed letter addressed to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, released as House lawmakers met to set the rules for debate ahead of Wednesday's planned vote on two articles of impeachment - formal charges - against the Republican president.

At the same time, the Senate's top Republican, Mitch McConnell, signaled he will not allow the expected upcoming Senate trial on impeachment charges to involve more fact-finding about Trump's conduct.

The rambling, six-page letter from Trump to Pelosi on White House letterhead largely restated the president's objections to the impeachment probe, but did so in accusatory

and sometimes spiteful language that attacked Pelosi, congressional Democrats, Trump's political rival Joe Biden and institutions such as the FBI.

Pelosi, Trump wrote, "is turning the House of Representatives from a revered legislative body into a Star Chamber of partisan persecution" while "scarcely concealing your hatred of me."

The impeachment probe, the president said,

is an "an illegal, partisan attempted coup that will, based on recent sentiment, badly fail at the voting booth," alluding to the November 2020 U.S. presidential election in which he is seeking another four years in office.

To that end, the letter's tone was more reminiscent of one of Trump's famously raucous campaign rallies and was likely intended to rally his loyal political base behind him as Democrats move to vote on Wednesday. The U.S. Constitution gives the House the power to impeach a president for "high crimes and misdemeanors," part of the document's checks and balances among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the federal government.

The Democratic-led House is expected to pass two articles of impeachment charging Trump with abuse of power and obstruction of Congress for his dealings with Ukraine.

"By proceeding with your invalid impeachment, you are violating your oaths of office, you are breaking your allegiance to the Constitution, and you are declaring open war on American Democracy," Trump wrote.

"You view democracy as your enemy!" he wrote.

House Democrats accuse Trump of abusing his

power by asking Ukraine to investigate Biden, a former U.S. vice president and a leading Democratic contender to oppose him in the 2020 election. Trump is also accused of obstructing the congressional investigation into the matter.

"Look, this has been a total sham from the beginning," Trump told reporters at the White House shortly after his letter was released.

Meanwhile, members of the House Rules Committee met on Tuesday over the rules for the debate before the vote set for Wednesday by the full House, which is expected to result in Trump becoming the third U.S. president to be impeached.

No president has ever been removed from office via the impeachment process set out in the Constitution.

Earlier, McConnell brushed aside a Democratic request to call four current or former White House officials as witnesses in the Senate impeachment trial expected next month, again making clear that he expects senators not to remove Trump from office.

While McConnell said on the floor it was the Senate's role simply to act as a "judge and jury," he later told reporters that he is not "an impartial juror."

REUTERS

"By proceeding with your invalid impeachment, you are violating your oaths of office, you are breaking your allegiance to the Constitution, and you are declaring open war on American Democracy."

Donald Trump

Tornadoes sweep across southeastern U.S., killing 3

2 Tornadoes swept across swaths of the southeastern United States killing at least two people in northern Alabama and one person in Louisiana, tearing roofs off buildings, splintering trees and downing powerlines, officials said. Most of the tornado and storm damage was reported in parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas starting early Monday, sheriff's officials told local media.



"Initial reports suggest first tornado was reported in Louisiana around 10:35 (a.m.) CST and first tornado fatality was somewhere around 11:18 a.m. CST," said NWS meteorologist Jared Guyer. REUTERS

Senate sends massive defense bill for Trump to sign

3 The U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly on Tuesday to pass a \$738 billion defense policy bill that creates President Donald Trump's "Space Force" and gives federal employees 12 weeks of paid parental leave, sending it to the White House, where Trump has promised to quickly sign it into law. The Republican-controlled Senate voted 86 to 8 in favor of the National Defense Authorization Act, or

NDA. The Democratic-led House approved the bill by 377-48 last week. Trump said on Twitter last week that he would sign the bill as soon as it passes, saying it included all his priorities. As one of the few pieces of major legislation Congress passes every year, the NDA becomes a vehicle for a range of policy measures as well as setting everything from military pay levels to which ships or aircraft will be modernized. REUTERS

Biden, 77, is healthy and fit to serve as president

4 Former Vice President Joe Biden is healthy enough to undertake the duties of the U.S. presidency, his doctor said on Tuesday in a health report released by the Democrat's campaign. Biden, 77, is one of 15 Democrats seeking their party's nomination to run against Republican U.S. President Donald Trump next year in a battle in which the incumbent and the top three of his would-

be opponents are all septuagenarians. Biden, who suffered a brain aneurysm in 1988, has no symptoms of similar problems, and while his heart beats irregularly, he is "completely asymptomatic," said Dr. Kevin O'Connor, who teaches medicine and directs the Executive Medicine program for George Washington University. The former vice president is taking anticoagulant medication for his heart. REUTERS

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NEWS

Podcaster Adam Carolla, a conservative, talks to Metro about his new documentary on cancel culture and free speech.



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Every day, we hear about attacks on free speech and free thought.

That these assaults come in the guise of liberals silencing conservatives – not allowing conservative speakers, professors or comedians at universities, shouting down those whose voices don't match their own in the name of trigger warnings, safe spaces or cancel culture – is against the tenants of the First Amendment stating that

'No Safe Spaces' for Adam Carolla



Adam Carolla's take on Trump: "I'm not triggered by him."

CONTRIBUTED

freedoms of religion, speech and the press are among Americans' most prominent rights.

To this end, America's most downloaded podcaster-comedian Adam Carolla and radio talk show host-author Dennis Prager – conservatives, both – filmed their "No Safe Spaces" documentary over the course of two years with director Justin Folk, starting with conservative podcaster-writer Ben Shapiro's September 2017 speech at UC Berkeley, the birthplace of liberal campus activism in the '60s, and now the flashpoint for cancel culture at its most violent. By October 2019, "No Safe Spaces" was ready to screen and distribute, first at several theaters in Arizona, then slowly through the rest of the U.S. due to unwilling liberal screening rooms and anti-conservative distribution chains, until Dec. 6 when the documentary opened widely. Even this success came with its headaches, however, as, on Dec. 11, a group of masked men intimidated "No Safe Spaces" moviegoers at a La Habra, California theater.

"It's not a film that a lot of folks in the 'mainstream media' can embrace, because it kind of takes a poke at them," said Carolla of "No Safe Spaces" during a phone call with Metro. "It's saying that they're not doing their job. The film is considered 'conservative' even though it features a bunch of liberal faces in it, all agreeing about the right to free speech. It's curious, though that it

is controversial because we're talking about the right to free speech. That shows you the state we're in – that free speech is controversial."

For all of their popularity as podcasters and radio hosts, Prager and Carolla could have simply stayed in the cozy confines of their respective studios and opined, as opposed to going out and making a movie. So why do it?

"People ask me all the time why I did 'No Safe Spaces,' in the same way they ask me why I did 'Dancing with the Stars,' and my answer is usually 'yes,'" said Carolla over the phone. "I used to have a regular job – carpenter, truck driver, roofer – so that when people ask me if I want to be part of a worthwhile project, I say 'yes.'"

In "No Safe Spaces," conservative-minded university professors, sociopolitical commentators (e.g. Ann Coulter) and television personalities (e.g. Tim Allen) are shown as being removed from successful jobs due to their beliefs, or silenced – even shouted down by student groups gone un-governed by anyone but their own youthful peers. Carolla and Prager watched that happen too often to their contemporaries to let that go unchecked. "All of these situations are bad, but, to me, the scary Orwellian part is when a comment is misinterpreted. There was a tennis announcer [Doug Adler] who was talking about Venus Williams, and said she was putting on 'guerilla tactics,' as in 'gue-

rilla fighting,' 'guerilla warfare.' They took it as 'gorilla,' the animal, and he got fired. He said he used the phrase 'guerilla warfare,' all the time, but they said they didn't hear it that way, and now he doesn't have a job. That to me is really Orwellian and scary," Carolla said.

As a comedian who "faces backlash all the time," Carolla is undisturbed and unmoved by any potential hassle he has received for the due-diligence of "No Safe Spaces" and its take down of cancel culture and anti-free speech rhetoric. "I make jokes, speak my mind, and people get angry. That's my business. I responded to Greta Thunberg getting the Time Person of the Year thing. I tweeted that was great, and hopefully she'd grow up to marry Mark Ruffalo, gets pregnant and gives birth to a recycling bin. Everybody tweeted me back that I'm an ass-h-le, OK, that's my business to make people angry. It's supposed to be to make people laugh, but a percentage of them just get mad. That's what I signed up for."

For all of Carolla's conservative viewpoints put forth in "No Safe Spaces," not once does he or Prager mention the President – America's top conservative – by name. What's his take on Trump?

"I don't have the Trump derangement syndrome that a lot of people have," said Carolla. "I'm not triggered by Trump. I don't have that anger that people have toward him... it mostly amuses me."

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LIFESTYLE



Tom Holland and Will Smith play Walter Beckett and Lance Sterling. BLUE SKY STUDIOS

Directors Troy Quane and Nick Bruno talk new 'realistic' spy film with a meaningful message.

MOLLY GIVEN
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In the chaotic and hard-hitting world of espionage, the stakes are typically high, the characters are dangerous, the action is intense and the message is well, non-existent to say the least. In Nick Bruno and Troy Quane's

new animated film "Spies in Disguise," the ingredients for a great espionage story are there, but the duo also added a little extra — a moral message that can reach audiences of all ages. After recruiting huge Tinsel Town names to sign on, both Bruno and Quane set out to make an animated film that was funny, meaningful and most importantly, realistic to the classic world of espionage. "Spies in Disguise" follows Lance Sterling (Will Smith), the "World's Most Awesome Spy," and his genius

science whiz co-worker Walter Beckett (Tom Holland) after Walter turns Lance into a pigeon to now be the greatest "spy in disguise." After a series of classic obstacles and quite hilarious moments, both Lance and Walter learn a little more about themselves and what it really means to come together as human beings.

It was important for you both to make this a very realistic spy movie — were there any specific films that you drew inspiration from?

The animated world of espionage

NB: We studied all of them, but I would say one of our favorites that we drew from would be "Skyfall." The concept of turning the world's greatest spy into a pigeon is a little ridiculous, but we didn't want this to be a spoof, and there is a really important message for kids, so we wanted to feel that the movie had the legitimate grounding to it. So we played close attention to the tropes of spy movies, and when it came to science we actually were looking into the real science of it all. Obviously, you have to make some stuff up because nobody has done that yet, but most of the stuff we talked about really is a way to break into genetics. We just wanted to make sure that the characters felt sincere and that the kids believe that this is the world we live in as well.

Was Will Smith always your top choice for the character of Lance?

TQ: Yes, we wanted to make a legitimate spy movie and to make the character of Lance Sterling iconic and be able to stand up and counted amongst James Bond or Jason Bourne, and we knew that would take a pretty big performance. It had to be someone who was funny, larger than life, and a little arrogant but still so charismatic that you wanted to cheer for him. So when we talked about our heroes growing up and who could fill those shoes — it was just always Will Smith, he's got such a charm and a charisma. He was the one person who we thought could make this character unique, so we pitched him the movie. He's such a grounded and down to earth guy, and he's not just a great actor, but

also a great storyteller. He loves to be involved with what we're saying with the movie — he loved the idea of the big action, the spy stuff, and the comedy with being turned into a pigeon, but he also really loved the underlying story of how coming together can make us stronger and that's how we're going to make a difference in the world.

Overall what do you hope audiences take away from the film?

NB: I think the biggest thing is that we might have our differences, but it's important that we find a way to work together whether we're on the soccer field or on the world field, and it's important to find some common ground because we are all just people.

"Spies in Disguise" hits theaters on Dec. 25.

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HOME

4 questions to consider before opening a new credit card



NerdWallet is a personal finance website.

When you're offered a discount at the check-out counter in exchange for applying for a new retailer-branded credit card, it can be tempting, especially if you're looking to defray big holiday gift expenses. But it's not always the right choice.

Applying for a credit card can temporarily lower your credit score and place more stress on your finances, especially if you're already carrying other credit card balances. After all, it's one more bill to



manage and one more card to potentially overspend on. The benefits

might also be overwhelming after that first-time discount.

Despite those drawbacks, a survey by the credit bureau Experian recently found that about 1 in 4 consumers plan to open a new credit card this holiday season. Among those who plan to do so, 36% said they want to score store discounts; 35% said they want to maximize their rewards and cash-back earnings. More alarmingly, 1 in 5 said they were opening a new card because their other cards were maxed out.

If you're considering opening a new credit card this season, here are some questions to ask yourself first.

1. Is it a good deal? Evaluate the card fully. One-time, upfront discounts are good, but ongoing incentives are potentially much more valuable.

For example, Target REDcard Credit Card cardholders get a 5% discount on eligible Target purchases and extra time for returns. Those with the Amazon Prime Rewards Visa Signature Card earn 5% back at Amazon, among other rewards. The Capital One Walmart Rewards Mastercard earns 5% back on Walmart.com

purchases and 2% back on in-store purchases, plus other rewards elsewhere.

"The holidays are a good time to open a new account if you do it carefully and wisely," says Rod Griffin, Experian's director of consumer education and awareness. "If you pick one or two retail stores where you get the best discounts and apply for their cards instantly, it can be a good strategy to save money — as long as you turn around and pay off that debt right away."

General consumer cards not tied to particular stores also offer shopper-friendly rewards: The Discover it Cash Back, for example, earns 5% in rotating bonus categories on up to \$1,500 in spending each quarter (activation is required; all other purchases earn 1% back). And in the final quarter of 2019, those bonus categories are Amazon, Target, and Walmart.com.

Beyond reward rates, also take into account a card's fees, ongoing APR and difficulty of reward redemption. Make sure these aren't deal-breakers.

2. Do you pay your existing balances in full and on time?

Many Americans carry a balance on their credit cards from month to month, according to a recent NerdWallet survey. Interest rates on those ongoing balances can be costly, easily outstripping the value of any rewards or discounts, and adding a new card to the mix can exacerbate the problem.

"If you have balances that are too high or you have too many open credit accounts already, then it's probably not a good idea to open a new one," Griffin says.

Paying on time is also key. If you're already having trouble juggling multiple due dates or habitually pay late (and incur late fees), then it's probably not ideal to open yet another card that you'll have to manage.

3. Do you stick to your budget?

For some people, credit cards — and especially rewards credit cards — can lead to overspending. If you decide to get a new card, make sure you have enough money in your checking or savings account to cover whatever you buy before interest kicks in.

If you know you'll be tempted to blow your budget, skip the new

card application and pay with cash or debit instead.

4. Do you already have the loans you need for the near future?

When you apply for a new credit card, it triggers a hard pull on your credit report, which can have a small, negative impact on your credit scores (such as a five-point drop) for up to a few months, Griffin says.

That means that if you're also planning to apply for a mortgage or auto loan soon, you may want to protect your credit scores by avoiding applications for new credit accounts now.

The bottom line

If you answered "no" to more than one or two of these questions, it's probably better to hold off on applying for any new cards, despite the temptation. But if you answered "yes" to all or most of them, a new card might be the right call. If you choose the best one for you, it can help stretch your budget, not just during the holidays, but throughout 2020 as well.

This article was written by NerdWallet and was originally published by Forbes. **KIMBERLY PALMER**



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SPORTS

Brady just 'doing his job'

Bill Belichick has Tom Brady playing turnover-free football.



MATT BURKE
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It's become something of a hobby around these parts to read between the lines when it comes to the relationship between Tom Brady and Bill Belichick.

As frustrated as Brady has been this season, and with more and more signs pointing to this being Brady's final year in New England – it actually seems as though Belichick is pretty happy overall with Brady's play.

The main thing Brady is being asked to do is to limit turnovers, and over the course of the past five weeks of football TB12 has thrown just two picks.

Here is what Belichick said in the locker room following the team's 34-13 win over Cincinnati on Sunday (via Patriots.com): "All right fellas, that was getting back to Patriot football there. Plus-five turnovers, taking good care of the ball,

four picks and a fumble recovery, 175 yards on the ground. Making progress. Making progress. That would be a winning formula. Don't turn the ball over, run the ball, play good in the kicking game, play good defense. That'll win for us. We qualified for the playoffs today for the 11th straight year, so we'll be playing football next month.

"We've got a short week, got to turn this around quick now. Let's get some rest and come in here Tuesday ready to go. Big game here. Let's keep grinding it out here and be ready to go against these Bills. Congratulations, men. That was a good job. That was a good week and good job here today."

It's clear that Belichick is putting the turnover battle as emphasis No. 1, as Brady is not only limiting his INTs but the Pats have only fumbled and lost four balls this entire season. In fact, New England's turnover differential is a plus-24 – the best mark in the league by a mile (Green Bay is second at plus-14).

The postgame moods of Brady and Belichick were telling following the team's 17-10 win over the Philadelphia Eagles last month. Brady was steaming in his postgame press conference, angry



Bill Belichick and Tom Brady chat before the Patriots played the Dallas Cowboys in November. GETTY IMAGES

about his mediocre stat line (26-of 47 for 216 yards, zero TDs and zero INTs). Belichick, meanwhile, was elated (by Belichick standards) in his postgame presser, and he told Brady on

the field after the game, "good job."

"Good job" is the highest of praise from the prickly Patriots head coach, particularly when it comes to his interactions with Brady over the

years.

Belichick had to have been pleased with one fact – in particular – in the grind-it-out victory over the Eagles. That being, Brady didn't turn the ball over.

Brady has been throwing the ball in the dirt and out of bounds more than ever this season, and now we know why. He's doing exactly what Belichick is asking him to do.

Celtics back in action, facing Luka-less Mavericks

The Celtics will catch a break tonight in Texas against the Mavericks (9:30 p.m., ESPN) as Dallas will be without second-year man Luka Dončić, who is playing at an MVP-level this season.

Dončić suffered an ankle sprain against the Heat on Saturday night and could be out for a couple of weeks.

Dončić tallied a game-high 34 points in the two teams' first meeting this season back on Nov. 11 in Boston, though the Celtics won the game 116-106. Kemba Walker (29 points) made three key

fourth quarter 3-pointers in that victory while Jaylen Brown chipped in with 25 points.

The Celtics should be properly motivated to grab another win over the Mavs tonight as the C's are coming off back-to-back losses (122-117 at Indiana last Wednesday, 115-109 vs. Philadelphia).

The C's have only had one other back-to-back loss stretch this season as they fell at the Clippers on Nov. 20 and at the Nuggets on Nov. 22. The C's responded the following game with an 11-point win over the Nets at home.

No Christmas vacation

Hopefully the Celtics caught up on their rest over the past week, because they're about to endure a brutal stretch.

The Celtics still have seven games to play before the calendar flips to 2020. Here is the final stretch of Celtics basketball for the 2010s. Tonight at Dallas Friday vs. Detroit Sunday vs. Charlotte Dec. 25 at Toronto Dec. 27 vs. Cleveland Dec. 28 vs. Toronto Dec. 31 at Charlotte

MATT BURKE



Jaylen Brown takes it to the rim against the Mavericks last month. GETTY IMAGES

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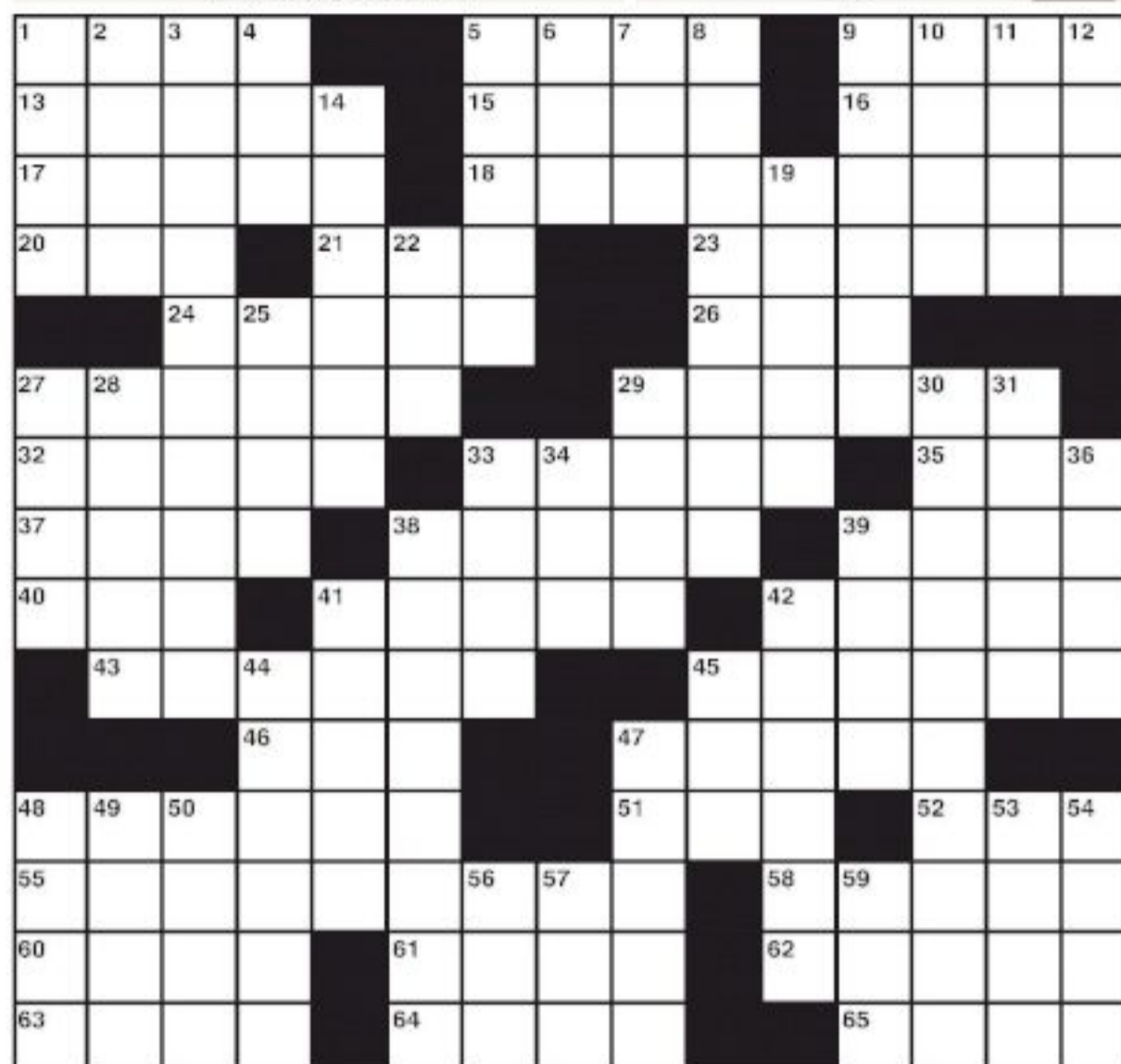
1 Part of the lower leg
5 "Get lost!"
9 Actor Sandler
13 Lubricated
15 Head covering
16 Hired vehicle
17 Actress Burke
18 Inform; illuminate
20 Happy ___ clam
21 Crazy
23 Paper fold line
24 Boring events
26 Barbie's beau
27 Destroy
29 Wild animals
32 Martini garnish
33 ___ out; say impulsively
35 Joint nearest the waist
37 Prescribed amount
38 Suspicious
39 Plato's "B"
40 Feminine pronoun

41 Shindig
42 Opposite of "urban"
43 Rehab candidate
45 Ocean ___; cruise ships
46 Spanish cheer
47 ___ Rica
48 Pelé's sport
51 Color
52 WWII president
55 Preventable
58 Numerical comparison
60 Prisoner's room
61 Pegs for Palmer
62 Item in a bedding package
63 ___-highs; long socks
64 Compass point
65 Carney's namesakes

DOWN

1 Malt shop order
2 Rushes
3 Foolhardy
4 Tennis court divider
5 Lean-tos
6 Cheap container
7 Have a bug
8 Deception
9 Greece's capital
10 Facts & figures

11 Bladed tools
12 "___ Eyes Have Seen the Glory"
14 Wreck
19 Magnificent
22 Grow gray
25 Talk wildly
27 Curtain holders
28 Luau greeting
29 Entomb
30 From that time on
31 Plucked instrument
33 Parks or Lahr
34 ___ up; ease
36 Buddies
38 Make a surgical cut
39 Tap a baseball
41 ___ up; accumulated
42 Staircase pieces
44 Submissive
45 Actor ___ Diamond Phillips
47 Bosom
48 Bag
49 Baker's need
50 Nat King ___
53 Try to lose weight
54 Decays
56 Actress Arthur
57 "___ Miserables"
59 Cry of discovery

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metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Don't leave anything to chance. Articulate exactly what you know, how you feel and what you want. A change of attitude will help ease stress and encourage a healthier lifestyle.

Taurus Be prepared to give a little and to take something in return. Be generous of your time and open with your feelings. An unusual opportunity shouldn't be ignored. A change looks promising.

Gemini Knowledge will be a powerful tool when you're facing someone who tends to stretch the truth or offer false information. Don't get into an argument; state the facts and keep moving forward.

Cancer Getting together with someone you haven't seen in a long time will be rejuvenating. The ideas you share with each other will encourage you to stay in touch and to collaborate more. Romance is in the stars.

Leo Take time to rethink your strategy. If your plan isn't panning out, switch gears and try something else. Don't let your emotions interfere with you making the right decision.

Virgo If you can't find the words, make your actions count. A kind gesture will be well received and will lead to an unexpected reward. Romance waits in the wings.

Libra Don't believe everything you hear. Consider the source of the information you receive and choose not to take action. Keeping the peace is in your best interest.

Scorpio Do things for others and reap the rewards. Your input will help bring about positive change to your community, family or employer. Celebrate with a loved one.

Sagittarius If you aren't sure, don't share. Information should be verified before you pass it along. Protect your reputation, important relationships and assets. Emotional spending should be avoided.

Capricorn Your actions will speak for you. If you love someone, show them how much. You don't have to buy expensive gifts; affection and passion should suffice.

Aquarius Tidy up loose ends. Take advantage of tax incentives and other savings you can make before the year ends. A positive change will be the result of helping others.

Pisces What you say may be disputed by someone who doesn't see things your way. Rely on honesty and integrity if you want to come out on top. Don't embellish; truth matters. EUGENIA LAST

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